

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Commissioner Chair Ardner called to order the regular meeting of the Mora Public Utilities Commission at 3:00PM on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, in the City Hall council chambers.

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners, Greg Ardner, Ryan Christianson, Joe Heggernes and Brett Baldwin

Absent: Commissioner Dave Chmiel

Staff Present: General Manager Glenn Anderson, Administrative Services Director Natasha Segelstrom, Public Works Director Joe Kohlgraf, Accountant Kelly Christianson, Human Resources Director Mandi Yoder, and Utility Billing Clerk Jessica Bliss

3. Adopt Agenda: MOTION Made by Heggernes, seconded by Christianson, and unanimously carried by the PUC to approve the agenda presented.

4. Consent Agenda: MOTION made by Christianson, seconded by Baldwin, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda.

- a. **Meeting Minutes** – January 16, 2024
- b. **Claims** - January 2024

5. Open Forum: No one spoke at open forum.

6. Special Business: There was no special business.

7. New Business:

a. Customer Agenda Request High Water Usage JCF Properties:

John Fuhr of 1819 Hwy 65, JCF Properties spoke to the PUC about a high-water bill. Fuhr explained that from July 27, 2023 through October 8, 2023, there was high water usage, and it was determined by Kohlgraf, the meter had failed and may have been caused by lightning. Fuhr requested a credit of 50% for water used above the average use during the period of July 27, 2023, through October 8, 2023. Kohlgraf explained the requested 50% credit by Fuhr would be a \$1,753.01 credit for the water bill and \$2,735.71 for the sewer bill. MOTION made by Christianson, seconded by Heggernes, and carried to approve JCF Properties customer credit for \$1753.01 for water and \$2,735.71.

b. Quamba Flow Meter Purchase:

The PUC reviewed a request to purchase and install a six-inch flow meter for the Quamba lift station force main. Kohlgraf explained the existing meter has failed and needed replacement to track continued flow at that site. There were quotes for the flow meter replacement from MTS (Badger Meter) and TCS (Rosemount Meter). MTS (Badger Meter) was an exact replacement and TCS (Rosemount Meter) had SCADA control programming and would allow remote readings. Kohlgraf expounded the higher cost meter with TCS reduced the confined space entries by staff and its remote SCADA readings. The TCS (Rosemount Meter) increased safety for staff. Funds to purchase the flow meter were included in fixed assets and the repair and maintenance line item and were budgeted. MOTION made by Baldwin, seconded by Christianson, and unanimously carried to approve the purchase of Rosemount Flow

Meter / Total Control Systems for \$10,833.

c. 101 Villa Drive:

Curt and Laurel Robertson spoke to the PUC regarding sewer backups located at their residence of 101 Villa Drive. Curt Robertson met with City Administrator Glenn Anderson on January 29, 2024, and provided details on the backups at his residence that occurred in 2008, 2019 and in 2021. In 2008 the League of Minnesota Cities denied any responsibility due to the city having performed annual maintenance. For the city to be responsible for damage for sewer backup, there must be a shown defect to exist, the defect caused damage and the city knew of the defect and did not repair it in a timely manner. Robertson summarized the 2019 loss and the 2021 loss along with correspondence to Kohlgraf and correspondence efforts made toward Anderson. Robertson expressed concern with his ability to change insurance companies due to the number of claims and the impact of his home value because of the insurance claims and requested the following in writing:

- 1) Written maintenance schedule for the lines that affect the property.
- 2) Written answer if the city can be billed directly in the future for clean-up including restoration by professional cleaner, and purchase and replacement of all damaged items, which in the past has included sheet rock replacement, new flooring, trim, and some furniture replacement. This would keep us from filing a claim with our insurance.
- 3) Written information on what plans the city might be working on to help prevent further backs.

Ardner asked if the maintenance schedule had been provided to the Robertson's previously and Kohlgraf noted that the city did not receive a public data request.

Robertson asked what measures the city planned to take in the future to prevent the issue from occurring again, other than root killer. Kohlgraf referenced a method that was used to reline the current sewer line and that it was not an option due to contractor availability for that service. Kohlgraf suggested an entire line replacement and that Villa Drive was on the City's street improvement plan. A full reconstruction would replace the sewer and water lines.

It was understood, upon receipt of public data request, the city would provide the requested information to include written maintenance schedule, the attorney recommendation, and any plans for the sewer line to Curt and Laurel Robertson.

d. Employee Wellness Fund Contribution:

Segelstrom presented a request for the PUC's consideration for a monetary contribution to the Steering Committee wellness fund. The Steering Committee is comprised of City and Utility Staff, a PUC Commissioner, and a seat from the City Council. The Committee's purpose is "To work together to promote workplace wellness and teamwork through employee engagement and to discuss and attempt to resolve issues of mutual concern." The committee encourages healthy habits and an active lifestyle. Past funds have been used for employee recognition dinners and wellness activities. The PUC approved a \$500 contribution to the Steering Committee

Wellness Fund. MOTION Made by Christianson, seconded by Heggernes and unanimously approved to approve a \$500 contribution to the wellness fund.

e. Electric Automated Outage Call Out System-mPower:

Kohlgraf brought forward a request to purchase an automated electrical outage call-out system. Prior to the East Central Energy contract, MMU's after hours and emergency calls were received by local law enforcement. With MMU's contract ending with ECE, the Sheriff's Office declined to take that service. Kohlgraf explained the automated system would support electrical distribution repairs, on-call, and after-hours emergency related issues with MMU electrical system. The automated system is tied to our current GIS System and could receive information that would assist staff response, assist to pinpoint issues and control paperwork. This system could expand in the future with the water utility and AMI meters. The one-time cost to start-up, build and set-up costs was \$15,000 and the maintenance and housing fee would be \$1,500 per year moving forward. MOTION made by Heggernes, seconded by Christianson, and carried to approve the purchase of automated answering system from mPower for \$15,000 to and come out of the electrical distribution fund balance.

f. Well Maintenance / Repair – High Service Pump Maintenance/Repair:

Kohlgraf brought forward a request for maintenance and repair for well #3 which was scheduled for replacement in 2023 and well high service pump #6 due in 2024. The maintenance and repair were on a 10-year rotation for service. Kohlgraf explained the costs were included in the budget and requested approval to move forward with the maintenance and repair. The estimated cost for well rehab #6 was \$17,375 and the estimated cost for high service pump #3 was \$11,430. Kohlgraf requested approval not to exceed \$20,000 for the well maintenance and repair and approval not to exceed \$14,000 for the high service pump. MOTION made by Christianson, seconded by Baldwin, and carried to approve the well maintenance/repair and high service pump maintenance/repair.

g. Wastewater Plant Digester and PFA Funding:

City Engineer, Greg Anderson of SEH, discussed the 2015 Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project. In 2015, the Wastewater Treatment Plant Rehabilitation project planned for a new digester (larger) and supplemental reed beds. Due to the added cost of the digester, the digester was not included in the project. Anderson explained to be eligible for future funding from the PFA, and to plan for future expansion a Project Priority List (PPL) for funding from the PFA must be submitted. Due to project costs for a new digester and added reed beds it would likely require outside funding. Anderson explained that placement on the PPL did not obligate the City to accept funds for the project or to obligate it to complete the project. He explained that if the City were to request placement in March 2024, the soonest that construction would take place was three years and that projects on the PPL took longer. The PFA provides a low interest loan program. MOTION made by Heggernes, seconded by Baldwin, and unanimously carried to move forward with the Project Priority List for Public Facilities Authority funding.

8. Old Business:

- a. Heavy Duty Service Truck Update:** Kohlgraf brought forward an update on the Water/Sewer Heavy Duty Service Truck Purchase. He explained the Minnesota State

Bid costs were re-release and there had been a price increase to the utility box and crane attachment. The budgeted amount had been \$125,000 and the actual cost increased to a total amount of \$162,109. Kohlgraf requested approval to purchase the Water/Sewer Heavy Duty Ford F-500 4x4 service/crane truck for \$163,000 and the deficit amount of \$37,109 be taken from the water/wastewater reserves. MOTION made by Baldwin, seconded by Christianson, and unanimously carried to approve the purchase increase from \$125,000 to \$163,000 for the increased costs of utility box and crane using State Bid contracts.

9. Reports:

- a. **Public Utilities General Manager:** Noted the weather and its impact to the budget with overtime, new staff onboard have been doing well.
- b. **Public Works Director:** First water main break of the year. The electric crew and on-call status. There have been a lot of poles being replaced and transformers. NW feeder was being upgraded and all the crews were doing well. Street crew have been working on brushing.
- c. **Commissioner Heggernes:** Nothing new to report.
- d. **Commissioner Chmiel:** Absent
- e. **Commissioner Baldwin:** Nothing new to report.
- f. **Commissioner Christianson:** Nothing new to report
- g. **Chairperson Ardner:** Nothing new to report

- 10. Adjournment:** MOTION made by Christianson, seconded by Heggernes, and unanimously carried to adjourn at 3:51PM.


Chair
Secretary